

AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Page 1-- add a new paragraph before the first paragraph (line 1)

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Page 1-- add a new paragraph before the last full paragraph (line 30)

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Page 10-- add a new paragraph before the first full paragraph (line 7)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Page 11-- amend the second, third and fourth paragraphs and add two new paragraphs after the fourth paragraph (line 13)

Figure 10 shows part of the fastening system in the assembled condition as shown in Figure 7, wherein the common hinge is moved upwardly out of the laying plane and the two panels form a kink,

Figure 11 shows part of the fastening system in the assembled condition as shown in Figure 7, wherein the hinge is moved downwardly out of the laying plane and the two panels form a kink, [[and]]

Figure 12 shows part of a fastening system with panels as shown in Figure 6 in the laid condition of two panels with a filler between the positively engaging profiles of the long narrow sides, and

Figure 13 shows a perspective view of a panel, partially cut away, having the fastening system shown in Figure 1 and Figure 6.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Page 11--amend the last paragraph

Figure 2 shows a side view on an enlarged scale of a portion of an embodiment of the fastening system 2. Figure 2 shows a first retaining profile 4a of a panel 4 with a hook element 4c which is formed from a leg 4e which projects substantially perpendicularly from the narrow

side and which is arranged at the top side 6 of side 16 of the panel. In this case a hook projection 4f which faces towards the underside 7 of the panel 4 is arranged at the free end of the leg 4e. The hook projection 4f is in engagement with a hook projection 5f of a second panel 5. The hook projection 5f of the second panel 5 forms the retaining profile of the rear narrow side. It is also formed from a leg 5e which projects from the narrow side of the second panel 5 and is arranged at the underside 8 of the second panel 5. The hook projection 5f is also arranged at the free end of the leg 5e and faces towards the top side 9 of the panel 5. The hook projections 4f and 5f of the two panels 4 and 5 are hooked one into the other.

Page 13--amend the first paragraph

Clearance L2 is further provided between the end 5h of the hook projection 5f at the lower side of the second panel 5 and the inside surface 13 of the first panel 4. That resulting intermediate space can also serve as an adhesive pocket 12. The same applies in regard to the end 14 of the hook projection 4f at the top side of the first panel 4 which in the assembled condition bears against the second panel 5 at least in the region of the top side 6 and sides 16 and 9 of the panels. In the present embodiment, an intermediate space which is also in the form of an adhesive pocket 12 is enlarged beneath the top side 6 and sides 16 and 9 of the panels towards the interior of the joint.

Page 14--amend the paragraph that carries over to page 15

Figure 5.1 shows a further embodiment which is based on the embodiment of Figure 5. In this respect identical features in those two Figures are denoted by the same references. In comparison with the embodiment of Figure 5 the embodiment of Figure 5.1 is designed in such a way that the end 35 of the hook element 24 at the top side of the first panel 22 has at its free end a projecting detent or latching element 36 which engages into a recess 37 of undercut configuration in the hook element 25 at the underside of the second panel [[24]] 23. In order to latch the hook elements 24 and 25 a somewhat greater pressure has to be applied than in the embodiment of Figure 5. The panels 22 and 23 are arrested more firmly than in the embodiment of Figure 5 by the detent element 31 engaging into the recess 32 and the additional detent element 36 engaging into the recess 37. The projecting detent elements 31 and 36 respectively of

the panels 22 and 23 are in the form of beads or ridges which extend over the entire length of a narrow side. It will be appreciated that, instead of a bead on a hook projection, it is also possible for example to provide a projecting nose having a bevel (not shown), with the bevel of the nose being so oriented that, with increasing progress in the joining operation, the corresponding hook element is gently expanded. The recesses 32 and 37 of undercut configuration in the panels 22 and 23 are in the form of elongate channels which receive the beads in the assembled condition. The bead and the channel can be milled by so-called formatting in a production pass. For the purposes of joining the panels 22 and 23 a bead and a channel have to be fitted one into the other with elastic deformation of the hook elements 24 and 25. In addition the embodiments of Figures 5 and 5.1 differ in terms of the co-operation of the legs 26, 27 and the hook projections 29, 28. As shown in Figure 5 the leg 26 bears against the hook projection 29 and clearance is provided between the hook projection 28 and the leg 27. As shown in Figure 5.1 clearance is provided between the leg 26 and the hook projection 29 and the hook projection [[29]] 28 bears against the leg 27.

Page 15--amend the paragraph that carries over to page 16

One of the positively engaging profiles 42 is provided with a projection 44 which protrudes from a narrow side. The underside of the projection 44 which in the laid condition is towards the base has a cross-section with a convex curvature 45, for the purposes of affording a hinged connection. The convex curvature 45 is rotatably mounted in the complementary positively engaging profile 43. In the illustrated embodiment the convex curvature 45 is in the form of a portion of a circle. The part 46 of the narrow side of the panel [[42]] 40, which is arranged beneath the projection 44 and which in the laid condition is towards the base, is further back from the free end of the projection 44 than the part 47 of the narrow side, which is arranged above the projection 44. In the illustrated embodiment the part 46 of the narrow side, which is arranged beneath the projection 44, is set back approximately twice as far from the free end of the projection 44 as the part 47 of the narrow side, which is arranged above the projection 44. The reason for this is that the circular portion of the convex curvature 45 is relatively wide. In that way the furthest projecting point of the convex curvature 45 of the projection 44 is so arranged that it is somewhat beneath the top edge 48 of the panel 40.

Page 18--amend the paragraph that carries over to page 19

A further kind of joint between the panels 40 and 41 is shown in Figure 9, whereby the panel 41 with an opening 52 is laid and a further panel 40 with a projection 44 is displaced in the plane of laying of the panels and perpendicularly to the positively engaging profiles 42 and 43 in the direction indicated by the arrow P until the walls 53 and 54 of the opening 52 of the panel [[51]] 41 elastically expand a little and the convex curvature 45 of the projection 44 has moved beyond the undercut configuration at the front end of the concave curvature 55 of the lower wall 53 and the definitive laying position is reached.

Page 21--add a new paragraph at the end of the description (line 3)

Figure 13 shows a floor covering 1 incorporating the fastening system described herein. Rectangular panel 64 has oppositely disposed short edges and long edges. Mutually matching retaining profiles 4a and 4b are formed in the short narrow sides 65, 66, respectively, of panel 64. Additionally, panel 64 has mutually opposite positively engaging profiles 42 and 43 formed in the long narrow sides 67, 68, respectively, of panel 64.